

**MINUTES
STATE PRESERVES ADVISORY BOARD
WILDLIFE RESEARCH STATION
BOONE, IOWA
JANUARY 20, 2000**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Robin Fortney
Kathy Gourley
Paul Johnson
Gary Phillips
Timothy Sproul
Jonathan Steege, Chair
Lois Tiffany

ADVISORS PRESENT

Diane Ford-Shivvers
Shirley Schermer (arrived 11:20 a.m.)

ADVISORS ABSENT

Dorothy Baringer
Rebecca Conard
Robert McKay
Jan Nash
Daryl Smith

STAFF PRESENT

Mike Carrier
John Pearson
Daryl Howell
Ruth Herzberg

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Steege called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

The following adjustments were made to the agenda:

- Item 14a – Fire Management Discussion
- Item 14b – Ft. Atkinson and Maze

- Item 14c – National Park Service – Loess Hills Study

Motion was made by Lois Tiffany to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Robin Fortney. Motion carried unanimously.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

Chairman Steege introduced Robin Fortney and welcomed her to the Preserves Board.

Ms. Fortney provided her background information to the Board.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion was made by Timothy Sproul to approve the meeting minutes of October 15, 1999 as presented. Seconded by Kathy Gourley. Motion carried unanimously.

SEED HARVEST REPORTS

Gene Kromray

Gene Kromray circulated photos of seed harvesting done at Kalsow prairie. He noted that there was a lot of local interest in the machinery and in the harvest itself, adding that the comments were all positive. He explained that the seed would go back to public lands. He gave an overview of the seed collection effort covering the process used and the minor problems encountered with the machinery.

Mr. Kromray stated that on behalf of Curt Baker, Wapello CCB Director, he would like request that they be allowed to use the machinery to harvest some seed for a planting project on their area. He related that the prairies they would like to harvest for that project would be Rolling Thunder, Dinesen and Kalsow.

Chairman Steege informed Mr. Kromray that there is a form to fill out and submit to the Board to request permission for the project.

Jaime Edwards

Jaime Edwards, Coordinator for the Nongame Program, thanked the Board for the opportunity to collect seed at Steele Prairie. She gave a slide presentation on the seed harvest noting that they used a crew of inmates from Rockwell City. She highly praised the work of the inmate crew and related that the project was incredibly successful. Ms. Edwards circulated a sampling of seed collected when the screen broke and noted that even though it wasn't very clean they were still able to use the seed. She showed a picture of a dryer built by the Saylorville Wildlife Unit. She related that there was minimal impact to the preserve from the combine that was used. She reported that they ended up with 20 bags of seed and yielded 5,000 pounds of material but the seed content was

low. Ms. Edwards stated that, overall, the project brought in about \$20,000 worth of seed. She related that Mr. Kromray was paid \$5,000, which left a net gain of \$15,000 by harvesting off a preserve, rather than buying from a private grower. She noted that the seed was planted at Waterman Prairie. She stated that they did some hand harvesting and used a portable dryer built by the Newton Correctional Facility. She told how they dried and cleaned the seed and related that they collected as much seed hand harvesting as they did with the machine. She noted that over 50 species of plant materials was collected. Ms. Edwards discussed where and how the seed would be used.

John Pearson asked Mark Plymale to report on what has been done at Ledges State Park.

Mark Plymale and Mark Peters reported that they received seed from Walnut Creek and planted it in a 28-acre field that had previously been in brome grass for years. They indicated they would clear other areas in the park and plant them with prairie seed in the future.

Ms. Edwards distributed a written report with statistics regarding the seed harvest.

Discussion took place on details of the seed harvest and the mix collected.

John Pearson noted that Gene Kromray is planning to submit an application to harvest seed in Wapello County in the Fall of 2000.

Gary Phillips commented that if a work force is available it might be good to look at doing some early summer harvesting to get some of the seed that is available at that time. He related that harvesting only in the fall always collects the same mix and it would be nice to get some spring/early summer seeds.

Chairman Steege pointed out that the Iowa Ecotype Project is also working in that direction.

Jaime Edwards noted that Kalsow and Steele prairies are in need of burning and she would encourage using the Rockwell Facility group to help in that effort.

John Pearson stated that Kalsow prairie is due for a spring burn, and Steele prairie had an accidental burn three years ago and may have missed a burn.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Daryl Howell distributed copies of the Request for Research and Inventory Proposals for State Preserves. He related that it has been sent out to various interests and staff is looking at possibly placing it on the web page. He noted that the projects would be sent to the Board to score before the next meeting.

Timothy Sproul inquired as to what type of response has been made in previous years.

Mr. Howell noted that there are approximately ten projects this year and usually there are more applicants than projects that can be funded.

PRESERVES GUIDE UPDATE

Ruth Herzberg stated that the department would soon be completing a contract with the University of Iowa for printing of the preserves guide, adding that it will cost approximately \$14.95 per book. The guide is 350 pages with two-color maps. She related that there were some blank pages which will be filled in with some sketches being provided by Kristin Goldsmith, an artist in the I & E Bureau. She circulated examples of some of the sketches to be used. She related that Kristin will also put together a cover with a picture of Sylvan Runkel on it. Ms. Herzberg explained details of the book and circulated sample pages of several preserves.

Mike Carrier explained that by the time the ready-to-publish version is completed and the subsidy for the book is available, it will not be on the market until a year from now. He related that Holly Carver indicated that Spring is the best time to release it. He noted that we are looking at retailing it for \$9.95 per book but consumers generally don't care at the \$9.95 versus \$14.95 levels. He noted that they are looking at five years for the life of the book. He related that the Department will provide to the public a brochure type preserves guide as an alternative until the book is available.

LONG RANGE PLAN

Daryl Howell reported that he is waiting for a few final items to come in and related that he has not had time to do the formatting and compiling of the entire plan.

EARTH YEAR 2000

Dianne Ford-Shivvers distributed copies of an agenda for the Earth Year 2000 kickoff to be held on January 21, and related that Denis Hayes will not be able to attend as previously planned, but Vice-President Gore will be present. She stated that this is a good opportunity for attendees to go back to their communities and network with people all over the state on Earth Year projects. She related that 900 people are expected to attend the kickoff to be held at the Polk County Convention Complex. Ms. Ford-Shivvers stated that Pat Boddy and her group will be providing musical entertainment. She noted that this is a real opportunity to promote some ecosystem management in the preserves.

Robin Fortney remarked that her company is trying to initiate an employee stewardship program and they will be looking projects to do in which they can encourage their employees to participate.

Ms. Ford-Shivvers noted that there would be a partner packet given out at the kickoff on how to organize and start projects, and how to get involved with the Earth Year support system.

PLANNING CALENDAR

Chairman Steege reviewed the draft planning calendar that was included in the agenda packet.

Kathy Gourley commented that she thought it was a good idea to use a planning calendar.

Motion was made by Kathy Gourley that the Board accept the planning calendar. Seconded by Robin Fortney.

Discussion took place on each of the items listed on the planning calendar.

The following changes/additions were made: January – Submit written, and verbally present, Seed Harvest Reports; Review previous year's Research Grant Reports in January as well as October; July - Encourage applicants to submit harvest requests by July meeting.

A lengthy discussion followed in regard to getting the word out to the public about the preserves and possibly having monthly articles in the Iowa Conservationist and on the web site. Mike Carrier suggested having Kevin Arrowsmith attend future Board meetings and do a news release on the Board meeting.

Vote on Kathy Gourley's motion carried with the inclusion of the noted changes.

Chairman Steege asked if the Board is going to do a Mines of Spain seminar this year. John Pearson noted that Wayne Buchholz indicated he would like to do it again this year, and it is organized at the local level.

Chairman Steege asked if there are any volunteers for the Nominating Committee for the upcoming Election of Officers. It was decided that the Board, as a whole, would consider whom they might like to have serve as officers.

REAP ASSEMBLIES

Chairman Steege stated that he noticed that there is seldom suggestions for regional projects at the REAP assemblies. He asked if the Board has any concerns as far as REAP goes. He related that the Governor has pushed for full funding of \$20 million. Chairman Steege noted that at the Congress which is held in July, each Congress has always rejected a change to the formula.

Timothy Sproul commented that this is the first time a Governor has supported full funding and that is something positive to build upon.

Discussion followed regarding attendance at the REAP assemblies and how to get more people to attend.

Director Johnson stated that if full funding is achieved, the Board should be aware that the Open Spaces Account is available to them.

Chairman Steege encouraged Board members to attend the REAP assembly in their area.

NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY SEMINAR

Diane Ford-Shivvers reviewed that at last year's Strategic Planning Session it was decided to have a seminar concentrating on natural areas inventory, where we are, where we want to go, and how to proceed with a natural areas inventory. She related that Mike Carrier suggested having it in September in conjunction with the Prairie Heritage Week. She gave examples where some problems could have been avoided if the inventory had been in place. Ms. Ford-Shivvers spoke about comparisons of the preserves system with neighboring states and distributed copies of those comparisons.

Chairman Steege asked if this would be envisioned as something more than a foray.

Ms. Ford-Shivvers replied that she was thinking it could be a table discussion with interest groups, information session and brainstorming on how to move forward on the natural area inventories. She related that it should involve targeted groups but the general public should also be invited. She noted that Mike Carrier suggested having groups other than DNR head it up, such as DOT, TNC, etc., and the DNR could be a co-sponsor.

Mike Carrier commented that the Natural Areas Inventory is a duty of the Preserves Board and he sees this as a pep rally, with a need to generate a motivation and involvement with stakeholders.

Discussion followed in regard to funding support as well as involvement with program support; looking at efforts already being made and coordinating those efforts; and capturing the information that is already there.

Timothy Sproul asked if this is a function of the Board or Parks Division if the Board is to resurrect the program and make budget requests up the ladder.

Mr. Carrier noted that the seminar is a way to let people know that there is a deficiency in the program and continuation of the program is a high priority of the Board.

Following brief discussion, John Pearson noted that the first step is building an advocacy to show support for the program.

Director Johnson stated that the seminar could be used as a way to tell the state that this Board exists and that it is time to take stock of what we have and that there is lots of opportunity to what we could do.

Robin Fortney suggested forming a small committee to meet with stakeholders to discuss the issues and come back to the April meeting with a report.

Discussion followed in regarding to dovetailing the seminar to an event around the state.

Gary Phillips noted that the Iowa Academy of Science is holding a seminar in October on exotic species and it could possibly be dovetailed there.

Chairman Steege appointed a committee to work in that direction. The committee consisted of Gary Phillips, Jonathan Steege, Robin Fortney and Diane Ford-Shivvers.

Director Johnson urged the Board to get excited about this and related that lowans are hungry for wild places.

LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS BY DNR

Mike Carrier distributed copies of a summary of DNR legislative proposals.

Director Johnson reported that the Governor's agenda includes full funding of REAP, and a major water initiative which will encourage farmers to install practices on their land to provide good water quality. This push would be to install vegetative buffers along rivers and streams and would also focus on restoration of wetlands. Director Johnson related that the water initiative proposal is to double the water monitoring effort to \$2 million. He noted that the Governor also proposed a couple of efforts regarding animal feeding operations. He recapped a number of small efforts as well. Director Johnson stated that there would be no new funds. He noted that the Governor will work with the Department on expanding efforts for the environment. He related that the Department has approximately 29 proposals submitted to the legislature.

Mike Carrier spoke about the legislative proposal to establish a Wild Places Program which would recognize landowners that have wild lands and would allow them to register them as such, enabling them to receive technical assistance and possibly monetary assistance as well as recognition for their efforts. He related that the Wild Places Program would cover three levels of protection as follows: 1) Registered Wild Places; 2) Protected Wild Places; and 3) State Preserves. He stated that he sees no problem with compensating landowners for their efforts in this area. He related that another part of this bill would authorize the Department, as part of the budget request, to request funds to purchase conservation easements and to administer a program of conservation easements, property tax reimbursement, or other financial incentives.

Mr. Carrier also discussed a bill to repeal the 10 horsepower motor restriction on Lake MacBride.

Director Johnson also mentioned a bill to change the Forestry Division name to Forests and Prairies Division. He discussed bills to increase the hunting and fishing license fees; night skies; and electric restructuring.

BRUSHY CREEK TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD LIAISON

Chairman Steege stated that since Diane Ford-Shivers was the Board's representative to the BCTAB, the Board needs to appoint a new representative. He appointed Robin Fortney to serve as the Board's representative and related that she has agreed to serve.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Chairman Steege stated that a Vice-Chair needs to be elected and he opened the floor to nominations.

Lois Tiffany nominated Gary Phillips for the position of Vice-Chair

Kathy Gourley moved that nominations cease and the Board cast a unanimous ballot for Gary Phillips. Seconded by Timothy Sproul. Motion carried unanimously.

FIRE MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

John Pearson reported on a Fire Management Symposium held in November relating that it was organized by Jean Eells, Forests and Prairies Division. He noted that approximately 60 people attended and was a wide range of participants, from professionals to people merely interested in the subject. He related that there was a wide range of topics from how to conduct burns to the legal aspects of conducting burns. Mr. Pearson reported that the State Fire Marshall said a variance can be granted during burn bans for natural resource management. Mr. Pearson noted that proceedings were recorded and posted on an internet site at the Iowa Prairie Network.

Discussion followed regarding burns, emergency response, and alerting the local fire chief about burns.

FT. ATKINSON:MAZE

Chairman Steege reported that the trees that were scheduled to be removed at St. James Preserve have been taken down and the tops of the stumps were ground out. Some of the trees were trimmed and nothing is rubbing on the church foundation. He related that the white pine remaining at the front of the church detracts from the site now, adding that you could see the church much better if it was removed.

John Pearson noted that he received a report from Scot Michelson about the tree removal and Scot also indicated that the white pine in the SE corner of the church should be taken down at some time.

Chairman Steege reported that the corn maze at Elgin will be moved next year to Elkader and the theme of the maze will be Ft. Atkinson and will be in the shape of a fort.

Brief discussion followed regarding the maze and that it will encourage tourism in the area.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE – LOESS HILLS STUDY

Mike Carrier reported that Congress appropriated \$235,000 to the NPS to do a special resource study to investigate whether it is feasible and desirable to have a park unit in the Loess Hills. He related that a planner from Omaha has been hired to lead the project out of the Omaha Regional Office and they intend to partner with the DNR and Loess Hills Alliance on a funded basis. Mr. Carrier related that Ruth Herzberg will work with that effort as a principal writer of the study. John Pearson and Daryl Howell will provide biological information and will serve as liaison with Department of Cultural Affairs on archaeological issues. He expanded on details of the study and public meetings to be held. He indicated that he will provide status reports to the Board on a regular basis. Mr. Carrier noted that the study will not make specific recommendations on what should be done but it will draw conclusions and Congress will make the decision on what should happen.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Jonathan Steege spoke about the Lewis and Clark Trail journey coming up this summer.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in the morning on Tuesday, April 25, with the tour being held in the afternoon on Monday, April 24, 2000. Possible areas to tour are Kalsow Prairie and Brushy Creek State Recreation Area.

BOARD TOUR

The Board did not tour in January, instead they attended the Earth Day 2000 kickoff on January 21, 2000, at the Polk County Convention Center. The Board held a work session at the Wildlife Research Station in Boone during the afternoon of January 20, to develop a list of tasks and schedule for implementation of the Strategic Plan.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the State Preserves Advisory Board, Chairman Steege adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m., Thursday, January 20, 2000.

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